

Wanted: 200 to 'scare the daylights out of people'

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GURNEE — Blood curling screams and maniacal laughs filled the air. Dozens of people wielded knives and hooks to instill terror.

This was part of Six Flags Great America's Fright Fest auditions, held Friday at KeyLime Cove. By the way, the knives and hooks were props.

"We're looking for people that are energetic and outgoing. It's a great opportunity — where else can you get paid to scare the daylights out of people?" said Great America spokeswoman Meredith Kelleher.

The goal is to hire about 200 people for Great America's 21st season of Fright Fest, she said. Job opportunities include character acting, makeup, wardrobe and set design.

Fright Fest begins Saturday, Oct. 1 and runs on weekends through the end of the month.

Fright Fest hopefuls gave a monologue or acted out a scene, gave their best screams and laughs, and interacted with props for Great America hiring staff. They were also measured for costumes.

Successful candidates like Roy Triveline and his daughter Molly, 17, were offered jobs on the spot.

Triveline is a biology teacher at Warren Township High School in Gurnee and Molly is a senior.

"I said (to Molly), we should do a play together. It's on my bucket list," Triveline said. "She found this audition."

He described the audition as "terrifying." Unlike his daughter, Triveline has no acting experience.

Molly said she does comedic improv.

She said her dad had a prepared monologue and was a "natural John Wayne."

"I had to play a vampire and clown, and do different screams and laughs. It was interesting doing scary improv," Molly said.

They both accepted the role of characters for "Streetmosphere," which is creepy characters following theme park guests.

Triveline said he planned to donate his Fright Fest salary to Cal's All Star Angel Foundation. The nonprofit organization supports terminally ill patients.

Fright Fest training for new hires begins in September, Kelleher said. There are two haunted houses and three haunted walkthroughs in the theme park, she said.

During the day, there are family activities for kids like trick-or-treating. The creepy characters come out at 4 p.m., she said.

There will be new characters and decorations to keep Fright Fest fresh, Kelleher said.

"We're definitely pushing the envelope. It's going to be scarier this year," Kelleher said.

More than 150 people total attended the Fright Fest auditions, 30 of which were walk-ins. There is an increase this year in second wage earners, according to a Great American spokeswoman. She also said jobs are still available for Fright Fest hopefuls.